



Watersheds

A watershed is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river or lake and is nature's way of dividing up the landscape. New England includes many eco-systems that, by virtue of their ecological value, recreational value, or proximity to large populations, hold a special significance to us. EPA New England is focusing particular attention and resources on these special places. Working closely with our federal, state and local partners, these community based initiatives are delivering tangible environmental improvements to these watershed areas.

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Quinnipiac River Watershed



Photo: Steven Winnett

Why Does the Quinnipiac River Watershed Need Special Attention?

- The Quinnipiac has 591,000 people in its 14 cities and towns, and supports native brook trout and stocked trout fishing, hiking, birding, canoeing, and state and community parks.
- Despite feeding into the third largest port in New England, the Quinnipiac watershed is one of the most productive seed oystering areas in the U.S., and its 834-acre tidal marsh is a wildlife refuge. Part of the upper river is a Wild Trout Management Area.
- More public access, recreational opportunities and dam improvements to allow fish passage are needed.
- Water use must be balanced with the need for water in maintaining healthy rivers and streams.
- Many paved surfaces cause storm water runoff problems, including sedimentation, erosion, flooding and bacterial contamination.
- Parts of the river and its tributaries are contaminated by toxic chemicals, nutrients and bacteria. The watershed has toxic sites and troublesome landfills that need corrective action, and garbage from illegal dumping that needs to be cleaned up.

What are the Long Term Goals?

- Clean up all significant sources of river pollution.
- Increase opportunities for safe fishing, swimming, boating and recreation along the river's banks.
- Involve the public in the long term health of the watershed, while encouraging economic and community development consistent with these goals.

Progress/Goals for the Future

What Partnership Progress has Been Made?

- The Partnership assembled the *Quinnipiac Watershed Action Plan* which highlights plans for education & outreach, habitat, land use, low flow/water allocation, tidal marsh, and water quality and also has an overview of the watershed's rivers and streams, and a report on its current condition.
- Partnership work groups and members produced studies of water quality and low flow, and presented findings at regional and state conferences, and to the new Connecticut Water Planning Council.
- The Partnership sponsored a workshop for municipalities on the upcoming storm water regulations.
- QWRA and EPA worked with CT Air National Guard to remove an old storage tank from the marsh.
- Stream walks by the Partnership's Habitat work group and QRWA identified degraded habitat and streamside restoration sites in six tributaries and the main river that resulted in restoration of an illegally filled area along the Muddy River. They also acted to biologically control the epidemic spread of the exotic plant, purple loosestrife.

What Major Actions are Planned for 2002?

- Distribute the completed watershed action plan to community members, and begin implementation.
- Develop a linear trail and greenway along the mainstem of the river, connecting to Wallingford's new linear trail, and develop new river access points.

(continued)

Quinnipiac River Watershed



Quinnipiac River Watershed

□ Town Boundaries
 □ Quinnipiac Basin Boundary

This map was created by the
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What Actions are Planned for 2002? (continued)

- ▶ Assist watershed towns in identifying opportunities for economic development that supports environmental improvement.
- ▶ Work with CT's new Water Planning Council on stream flow and water quantity issues.
- ▶ Begin restoration of habitat and streambank areas in Wharton Brook State Park and along the Quinnipiac River in the Meriden Gorge. Also restore a drainage swale in Harbor Ridge, and identify more opportunities for restoration activities through streamwalks with new funding from CT DEP and EPA.
- ▶ Work with municipalities to assist them in complying with upcoming storm water regulations.
- ▶ Continue working with interested parties to restore the habitats of the Quinnipiac tidal marsh.



Photo: Steven Winnert

Who is involved?

The municipal governments and citizens of Plainville, Southington, Cheshire, Meriden, Wallingford, North Haven, Hamden, New Haven, New Britain, Bristol, Wolcott, Prospect, North Branford, and East Haven • Watershed businesses and industries • EPA New England • CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) • Quinnipiac River Watershed Association (QRWA) • Yale University Center for Coastal and Watershed Systems (CCWS) • USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) • New Haven County Soil & Water Conservation District • The Soundkeeper • Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments • Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency • South Central Regional Water Authority • Quinnipiac River Linear Trail Advisory Committee • CT Department of Transportation • US Army Corps of Engineers • US Geological Survey (USGS) • Regional Growth Partnership • Quinnipiac Chapter of Trout Unlimited • East Side Civic Association • Cytec Industries • New Haven Bird Club • New Haven Land Trust • Cheshire Land Trust • Prospect Land Trust • University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, NEMO program • University of New Haven • Yale University Peabody Museum • Quinnipiac College • South Central Regional Council of Governments



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